

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

We claim:

1. (Currently Amended) A process for removing high boilers from crude caprolactam which comprises high boilers[,] and caprolactam~~and in some cases low boilers~~, and which has been obtained by
 - a) reacting ³6-aminocapronitrile with water to give a reaction mixture,
 - b) removing ammonia and unconverted water from the reaction mixture to obtain crude caprolactam, and

which comprises
 - c) feeding the crude caprolactam to a distillation apparatus to obtain a first substream via the top containing caprolactam as a product and a second substream via the bottom[,] by setting the pressure in the distillation in such a way that the bottom temperature does not go below 170°C, and adjusting the second substream in such a way that the caprolactam content of the second substream is not less than 75% by weight, based on the entire second substream.
2. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein step a) is carried out in the presence of a liquid diluent.
3. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 2, wherein the liquid diluent is removed in step b).
4. (Currently Amended) A process as claimed ~~in any of claims 1 to 3~~claim 1, wherein the removal of unconverted water is carried out in step b) by transferring the reaction mixture into conditions such that the reaction mixture forms a high-water and a low-water liquid

phase, of which the high-water phase is removed.

5. (Currently Amended) A process as claimed ~~in any of claims 1 to 4~~claim 1, wherein the crude caprolactam further comprises low boilers, which are removed between steps b) and c).
6. (Currently Amended) A process as claimed ~~in any of claims 1 to 4~~claim 1, wherein the crude caprolactam further comprises low boilers which are removed after step c).
7. (Currently Amended) A process as claimed in claim 5 ~~or 6~~, wherein the low boiler removed is 6-aminocapronitrile.
8. (Currently Amended) A process as claimed ~~in any of claims 1 to 7~~claim 1, wherein the second substream from step c) is partly or fully recycled to step a).
9. (New) A process as claimed in claim 6, wherein the low boiler removed is 6-amino-capronitrile.
10. (New) A process as claimed in claim 4, wherein the second substream from step c) is partly or fully recycled to step a).
11. (New) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the setting of the pressure in the distillation does not allow the bottom temperature to go below 185°C.
12. (New) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the setting of the pressure in the distillation does not allow the bottom temperature to go above 250°C.